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Manitoba

Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board

Basement Flooding Assistance Program Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach

1985

Final Report

MANITOBA

MANITOBA DISASTER ASSISTANCE BOARD

BASEMENT FLOODING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

TOWNS OF SELKIRK AND STEINBACH

1985

FINAL REPORT

MANITOBA DISASTER ASSISTANCE BOARD

FINAL REPORT ON

THE 1985 BASEMENT FLOODING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN THE

TOWNS OF SELKIRK AND STEINBACH

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Manitoba

Government Services

Manitoba Disaster
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The Honourable John S. Plohman
Minister of Government Services
Room 203 Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0V8

Dear Mr. Minister:

We wish to advise that the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board, established by Order-in-Council 759, dated August 19, 1981 and amended by Orders-in-Council 686, dated June 22, 1983 and 428, dated April 11, 1984, has completed the work assigned to it under Orders-in-Council 1361 and 1362, dated December 11, 1985, regarding the Basement Flooding Assistance Program for the residents of the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach. We, therefore, now submit the final report of the Board's activities and findings under this program.

We are grateful for the privilege of being of service to the residents of Manitoba.

Yours truly,

Joseph Masi, Secretary

Albert St. Hilaire, Chairman

G. Willis Ayers, Vice-Chairman

Rudy A. Regehr, Board Member

FORWARD

The heavy rains which struck the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach on August 17 and August 23, 1985, caused severe hardship to those Manitobans.

Efforts were made by many of the residents to clean the damages and also repair the affected homes.

The Manitoba Government announced a Basement Flooding Assistance Program to financially assist those individuals that incurred damages.

In the pages that follow, the details of this program are outlined as well as the activities and findings of the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Board wishes to express its appreciation to the Government of Manitoba for providing financial assistance to resolve the problems which arose from the heavy rains in the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach. Particular thanks should go to the Honourable John S. Plohman, Minister of Government Services, and his staff, all of whom provided the Board with information and other material aid to ensure the program was a success.

The Board also thanks its staff for the diligent and conscientious manner in which the business of the Board was conducted.

The Board is grateful to the Municipal Officials of the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach for their excellent cooperation with the Board in conducting the survey of their residents that suffered damages, distributing the application forms, and making their residents fully aware of the program.

Finally, the Board would like to thank the News Media for their help in promoting the program, and the public whom we were privileged to serve.

SECTION I

DAMAGES CAUSED BY THE AUGUST 17 AND 23, 1985 RAINS

The heavy rains that struck the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach on August 17 and August 23, 1985 caused severe damages to a number of the homes and buildings.

Many of the basements in the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach had six to seven inches of sewage and water on the floor which caused the loss of and damage to carpets, furniture and appliances. In addition, there was a great deal of structural damage to the walls, panelling, and tiles of the homes.

Most of the damages were caused due to sewage back-up from the town's sewer system. In the Town of Steinbach for instance, the problem was compounded by the fact that a run-off ditch near the homes had not recently been cleaned and failed to carry surface run-off away in time. In the Town of Steinbach, back-up occurs when the town is hit by extremely heavy rains which leads to an overloading of the sewage system, particularly on the west side of town nearest the lagoon.

The pumps in the Town of Steinbach at the lagoon lift station ran continuously for 32 hours after the rainstorm to catch up on the overload in the sewage system.

With respect to the Town of Selkirk, the situation was very similar, but the rain was much more intense, thus causing more homes and buildings to be damaged than in Steinbach. Most of the rain fell within one hour in duration in Selkirk.

SECTION 2

ORDERS-IN-COUNCIL

A. Establishment of the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board (Appendix A)

The Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board was established under Order-in-Council No. 759/81. It is responsible for: communicating government policy on disaster assistance; making decisions concerning payments in response to disaster assistance claims; and investigating and reporting to the Minister on disaster assistance matters. The Board provides a readily activated mechanism for dealing with damage related matters referred to it as a result of natural or human-made disasters.

B. Appointment of the Board Members (Appendix B and Appendix C)

Order-in-Council 686/83 appointed Mr. Albert St. Hilaire as a member and Chairman and Mr. Willis Ayers as a member and Vice-Chairman of the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board. Order-in-Council 428/84 appointed Mr. Rudy Regehr as the third Board member. These two Orders-in-Council outlined the powers and remuneration of the members of the Board.

C. The Basement Flooding Assistance Program (Appendix D and Appendix E)

Orders-in-Council 1361/85 and 1362/85 contained the Terms of Reference and Limits of Compensation of the Basement Flooding Assistance Program for the individuals and businesses in the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach whose homes and buildings were affected by the heavy rains on August 17 and August 23, 1985 respectively. The assistance was in the form

of an ex-gratia cash grant of up to 75% of approved costs, after a $250.00 deductible, to a maximum of $30,000.00. Financial assistance was provided to help defray the costs of damage to buildings and homes, including damage to wall panelling, furnaces, water tanks, electric wiring, raised floors and floor coverings. Financial assistance was also provided to help defray the losses and damages to moveable objects such as washing machines, dryers, freezers and other large appliances. In addition, loose rugs, furniture and clothing were also considered eligible for compensation. Damages for recreational items such as stereos, sports equipment, and video games were not eligible for compensation. The program was administered by the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board.

SECTION 3

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Shortly after the heavy rains struck the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach, the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Albert St. Hilaire, met with both Mayors.

The purpose of these meetings was to acquaint himself with the magnitude of the sewer back-up in both towns, and secondly to explain fully the procedures to be followed when applying for assistance. The Chairman also had the opportunity to answer questions from the Mayors related to what qualifies for compensation and the basis for such compensation.

At the conclusion of both these meetings, it was decided the towns would place a survey in their local papers which would ask the affected homeowners to complete the survey in order to determine the number of homes

affected, the level of water and sewer back-up in each home, and the approximate amount of damages. Both Mayors agreed to forward the results of the surveys to the Board within two weeks. A copy of the surveys which appeared in both local papers is enclosed under Appendix F.

The Town of Selkirk responded to the Board on September 19, 1985 with their survey results. The Town of Steinbach responded on October 16, 1985.

On September 26, 1985, the Board passed two motions recommending to the Minister of Government Services that assistance be offered to the residents of the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach for basement flooding damages incurred as a result of the heavy rains on August 17 and August 23, 1985 respectively.

On December 11, 1985, Cabinet approved the basement flooding assistance program for the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach and the Mayors of both towns received correspondence from the Minister of Government Services confirming this decision. A copy of the letter from the Minister to both Mayors is enclosed in Appendix G. In addition, a news release announcing the program to the public was issued. A copy of the news release is enclosed under Appendix H.

The first order of business for the Board was to place an advertisement in the local newspapers of the two towns announcing the basement flooding assistance program and indicating where applications could be obtained. A copy of this advertisement is enclosed under Appendix I.

After this advertisement was placed in the local newspapers, application forms began arriving in the Board's office. These application forms were segregated into the different streets of the two towns, coded, stamped numerically and recorded on index cards arranged alphabetically. File folders

were then prepared for each applicant. Registered ownership was checked and photocopies made of each application. These photocopies were given to the Chief Inspector who delegated them to the various inspectors. These inspectors were hired to inspect the damages of those individuals and businesses that had submitted an application form.

Upon completion of the inspection, the files were returned to the Chief Inspector for review and to ensure all of the necessary information was obtained by the inspector. The Chief Inspector then passed these files to the evaluating staff. Assessment of damages and losses were then calculated based on the Board's compensation guidelines, totalled and passed to the Secretary and the Board member for their approval.

Following this approval, award letters were prepared and signed by a Board member along with the Secretary. The award letters were then mailed to the applicants along with the financial assistance agreement form. The purpose of this form was to ensure that the claimant did not receive any other compensation from any other sources for his losses, and secondly that the claimant was satisfied with the amount of compensation. In situations where the assessment of structural damages amounted to less than $2,000.00, a cheque voucher was prepared and sent to the Department of Finance along with the award letter and the financial assistance agreement. This procedure also applied to awards granted for moveable objects, personal effects, etc. except that no limitation was placed on the amount of the award letter or voucher, provided the amount was within the limits approved by the Order-in-Council. In this case, a cheque requisition and the financial assistance agreement were required to be signed by the claimant.

Each award letter had a number and these numbers were listed on the index cards in the appropriate space. The files were then placed in completed file drawers in numeric order for future reference.

In a few of the situations, appeals were made by the applicants or evidence of additional costs were received. These were reviewed carefully by the Board, and if justified, supplements were awarded. A list of all the forms used to administer the Selkirk and Steinbach Basement Flooding Assistance Program is enclosed in this report under Appendix J.

The final item that the Board had to establish was the deadline for receiving applications. After consideration by the Board, a deadline of April 30, 1986 was established as the last date on which the Board could accept applications for assistance. A copy of the advertisement from each of the local newspapers announcing this deadline is enclosed under Appendix K.

One final item which must be mentioned is the fact that the number of applications from the Town of Selkirk was much less than anticipated. The Board attempted to make the program as available and as publicized as possible. The Board is confident that all those who wished to take advantage of the program had ample opportunity to do so.

A copy of all the newspaper articles written about the basement flooding assistance program is enclosed under Appendix L.

SECTION 4

SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES

WHO RECEIVED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR DAMAGES

The following is a summary of all the claims submitted for the August 1985 Sewer Back-up Program in the Towns of Selkirk and Steinbach to the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board for processing.

A. Town of Selkirk

Total Claims Received by the Board	144
Completed Claims	132
- Progress Payment - Nil	
- Appeal Case - Two (Both Denied)	
No Claim	12

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Award I - Under $2,000	110	$127,635.58
Award J - Over $2,000	22	53,626.56
Total	132	$181,262.14
Total Amount Paid for Moveable Objects & Personal Effects		$ 73,453.29
Total Amount Paid for Structural Damages		107,808.85
Total		$181,262.14

Average Amount of Compensation Per Claim	$ 1,373.20
Administration Costs -	$17,306.65

B. **Town of Steinbach**

Total Claims Received by the Board	10
Completed Claims	10
- Progress Payment - Nil	
- Appeal Case - Nil	
No Claim	Nil

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Award K - Under $2,000	10	$11,280.10
Award L - Over $2,000	Nil	Nil
Total	10	$11,280.10

Total Amount Paid for Moveable Objects & Personal Effects	$ 3,161.42
Total Amount Paid for Structural Damages	8,118.68
Total	$11,280.10
Average Amount of Compensation Per Claim	$ 1,128.01
Administration Costs -	$ 1,736.17

SECTION 5

CONCLUSION

The Board is satisfied that the Basement Flooding Assistance Program was administered according to the Terms of Reference and Limits of Compensation in the Orders-in-Council referred to the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council.

The Board wishes to express its commitment to continue to serve the Government of Manitoba whenever disaster assistance programs are referred to the Board for administration and implementation. It is only with the full cooperation of all people involved that the residents of Manitoba can continue to receive assistance in times of disasters. The Board pledges itself to that cooperation.

APPENDIX

NOT FILMED